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MEMOIR

OF

HON. HENRY C. MURPHY, LL.D.,

OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

BY

HENRY R. STILES, M.D.

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MEMOIR

OF

HON. HENRY C. MURPHY, LL.D.*

Our sister city, Brooklyn, has recently sustained, in the death of the Hon. Henry C. Murphy, the loss of one who was, in every respect, the most prominent citizen native to her soil. The Publication Committee of this Society, quick to note the significance of this fact, as well as to recognize the propriety of our taking public cognizance of it, requested me to prepare for the pages of our quarterly journal, The Record, a fitting memorial of one who was enrolled upon our list of honorary members and counsellors, and to whose labors the students of American history are deeply indebted. Compliance with such a request, from such a source, could not be, with me, a matter for hesitancy. Twenty years ago, in the organization of the Long Island Historical Society, of Brooklyn, it became my good fortune to be associated with Mr. Murphy; and the respect which I then conceived for his personal character and abilities, renders this task, which has been required of me, simply a duty to his memory.

His paternal grandfather, Timothy Murphy, was a native of Ireland, where he was educated as a physician, and from whence he emigrated to America in the year 1766. Settling in Monmouth County, N. J., he became a farmer, and married Mary Garrison, a grand-daughter of Richard Hartshorne, of Middletown, in that County, who was for several years a member of the Colonial Council, and a representative in the Assembly of that Province; and who, also, owned a large plantation adjoining to and including Sandy Hook. Upon the outbreak of the American Revolution, Mr. Timothy Murphy espoused the cause of his adopted country, and served in the ranks of her defenders at the battle of Monmouth, and elsewhere. He left eight children, four of whom were sons.

John Murphy (or John Garrison Murphy, as he wrote it in later life)

* Read before the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society.

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was the second of these sons, enjoyed the ordinary educational advantages obtainable by farmers' boys at that day, and was bred to the trade of a millwright. He married Clarissa Runyon, of Princeton, N.J., and, about 1808, removed to the village of Brooklyn. Here his industry and marked mechanical genius enabled him to establish a good business, and ultimately to secure a comfortable property. As a millwright he was concerned in the construction or repairs of nearly all of the old tide-mills which then existed in the neighborhood of Brooklyn; and, in conjunction with Mr. Rodman Bowne, he invented and patented the machinery of the horse, or "team-boats," which were used to cross the East River at the ferries (first at the Catharine, or "New Ferry"), before the full introduction of steam. He built all the machinery, not only for the horse-boats on the Brooklyn ferries, but for many other places throughout the United States, even to the Mississippi River and the Canadas. He promptly identified himself with the interests of morality and religion in his new home, for in 1815, seven years after his coming, he was one of the trustees and promoters of a "Society to Prevent and Suppress Vice in the Town of Brooklyn." He was, also, among the earliest promoters (1816) of a *public* school in the village, which was the beginning of the present public school system of Brooklyn; and, during the same year, he was one of five who established a village Sunday-school there, unsectarian in its character, and which finally culminated in the foundation of the Brooklyn Sunday-School Union. Of Mr. Murphy and his co-laborers in these and many other beneficent undertakings, viz., Andrew Mercein, Robert Snow, John Seaman, John Doughty, and Joseph Herbert, it may be truly said that, though neither wealthy nor (in the worldly acceptation of the word) influential, nor even "to the manor born," they were nevertheless the true foster-fathers of the infant village of Brooklyn. "Instant, in season and out of season," in every good word and work, and thoroughly unselfish in their desire to benefit their fellow-men, they were always to be found as the leaders of any enterprise which promised to advance the religious, educational, or higher social interests of the community; and they accomplished, in the course of their long and useful lives, an incalculable amount of good, the influence of which is even yet felt in the city which has arisen upon the scene of their former labors. Mr. Murphy possessed, in an eminent degree, the confidence of his fellow-citizens, whom he served for many years as a Justice of the Peace, a Judge of the Municipal Court, after Brooklyn became a city, and as School Commissioner. In politics he was a staunch Jeffersonian Democrat, and few men wielded greater influence in the councils of that party in Kings County. In religious matters he was, like his father, a consistent member of the Methodist denomination. He was a tall, fine-looking man, and his character was marked by prudence, reticence, and self-reliance. He died in 1853, in the seventieth year of his age, leaving four daughters and two sons, the eldest of whom was the distinguished subject of our sketch.

Henry Cruse Murphy was born in the village of Brooklyn, July 5, 1810, about two years after the removal of his parents thither; and it may be instructive to take a retrospective glance at the village scenes amidst which the days of his boyhood were passed. Brooklyn, as then seen from the New York side of the river, presented features of simple rural beauty strongly in contrast with its present imposing aspect. Around the "Old (now Fulton) Ferry" there was a clustering of houses, taverns, stables

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and shanties, which had grown up since the earliest establishment of a ferry at that point, and which formed the nucleus of a considerable business activity. From the ferry slip (with its horse-boat, its one steamboat, and its row-boat accommodations, but with no such conveniences as the present ferry-house affords, and with no bell save the resonant throat of the ferryman) the old country road, the "king's highway" of the colonial and revolutionary periods, straggled crookedly upward and backward, out past the old Dutch church, out through Bedford Corners, and away beyond Jamaica, even to Montauk Point; being, in fact, the great highway of travel of Long Island itself. As far as the junction of this old road (now Fulton Street) with the new road (now Main Street), which came up from the "New Ferry," as the Catharine Street Ferry was then called, the road was tolerably well lined with buildings of various shapes and sizes. Pert-looking Yankee frame edifices, rudely intruded their angularities among the humpbacked Dutch houses, quaintly built of stone, or with small imported Holland bricks. Yet one and all wore such an unpretending neighborly aspect, under the brooding shadows of the noble trees with which the village abounded, that it was plainly to be seen, even by the most casual observer, that no premonition of the future greatness, so soon to be thrust upon them, had as yet disturbed the minds of their occupants. Less than a quarter of a mile to the left of the "Old Ferry" was the "New Ferry," to Catharine Street, New York, and the road (present Main Street) which led from it, up the hill, till it met the "Old Ferry Road" (Fulton Street) was beginning to show a respectable number of frame buildings, all, however, of a comparatively recent origin. Beyond this ferry and street the land stretched northwardly (broken only by McKenzie's One Tree Hill and Vinegar Hill), to the verge of the Wallabout Bay, where John Jackson had a shipyard, and eight or ten houses for workmen. Adjacent to this was the infant United States Navy Yard (established in 1801); while beyond, along the curving shore of the bay, were the farms of the Johnsons, Schencks, Remsens, Boerums, and other old Dutch families.

To the right of the Old Ferry, and with an abruptness which, even at this day, is scarce concealed by the streets and buildings covering it, rose the northernmost corner or edge of that portion of the present city known as "The Heights," stretching southwardly to near the foot of the present Joralemon Street. The face and brow of this noble bluff were covered with a beautiful growth of cedar and locust, while its base was constantly washed by the waves of the East River. From its summit the land stretched away in orchards, pastures, and gardens, out to the old highway (now Fulton Street). This superb bluff, now known as "The Heights," was called by the aborigines "Iphetonga," or "the high sandy bank;" to the early villagers, at the period of which we speak, it was known as "Clover Hill," and its owners were Messrs. Carey Ludlow, the Hickses, Waring, Kimberly, Middagh, De Bevoises, Pierrepont, and Joralemon, who resided upon their respective farms in a state of semi-seclusion, almost prophetic of that social aristocracy which has since claimed "The Heights" as exclusively its own domain. From this elevated plateau, the eye rested upon a panoramic scene of unsurpassed beauty: the City of New York, with its glorious bay; Staten Island and the numerous lesser islands studding the bosom of the harbor; the Jersey shore, with the Orange Mountains for a background; further to the south was Red Hook,

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with its old tide-mills; the scattered farm-houses nestled along the curve of Gowanus Bay; Yellow Hook, and the forest slopes of Greenwood.

Time forbids that we should also recall the quaint and worthy old characters who pursued their callings, or wasted their leisure around the village corners; the rare old marketmen and jolly negroes, with their rude horse-play, and their "Paas" festival junketings, who clustered around the Old Ferry. But we can well imagine that the boy's lines were "cast in pleasant places;"—that his was a happy boyhood; and that, as he grew with the village, so he learned to love it and its people, and its widening prospects; and we begin to understand how, and why, Brooklyn came to be the one place, *par excellence*, where he ever preferred to live and to labor.

And while he was thus growing up amid all the advantages of a moral life and surroundings, he was, by virtue of his parents' watchful care and social standing, brought in contact with all that was best in the society of the village; as well as with that higher strata of culture and intellect to be found in the limited circle of New York people who—summer after summer—sought in the charms of Brooklyn residence a delightful retreat from the cares and the heat of the city.

His growing years gave early indications of abilities which his subsequent life so fully developed. A thorough preparatory education at the High School of New York, was followed by a brilliant course at Columbia College, from which he graduated, in 1830, with honor, and at the age of twenty years. "Of a Brooklyn ancestry older than the city of Brooklyn; of an American ancestry antedating the Revolution; receiving from his father the blood of the land distinguished for the brilliancy of her children and the desolation of her liberties, and from his mother the blood of the Dutch burghers who brought to the New World the noblest traditions of the Old, HENRY C. MURPHY began his career equipped as few have the good fortune to be, to do valiant service in the battle of life. With a sound collegiate education; with traditions of the best kind to hold him in the paths of honor; and with a prospect opened by the hands of friends to stir his ambition, he would have been an unworthy son had he not shown an early disposition to make the best use of the talents and advantages committed to his keeping."

He immediately entered as a student at law with the Hon. Peter W. Radcliffe, a practitioner in the city of New York, but resident in Brooklyn, as were several other well-known New York lawyers at that time, and for several years after. Mr. Radcliffe was one of the best lawyers of his day, and of eminent uprightness and purity of character. While a student with him, young Murphy made his first essay in literature and politics. His father's residence was next to the office of the *Brooklyn Advocate and Nassau Gazette*, of which James A. Bennett had recently (1832) become the editor, and to this, then one of the ablest and most partisan democratic sheets in the State, the young law student gave much gratuitous labor, finding his only reward in the opportunity which it afforded him of exercising and strengthening his powers. It is said that most of the editorials of the paper, at this time, were written by him; and that his articles, even at this early period, were noticeable for the clearness, precision, and logic which distinguished his subsequent public career.

Even before this, in 1830, when fresh from academic honors, he had been conspicuous in the preparation of a constitution and organization for

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a literary and debating society among the younger men of the village, known, at first, as *The Young Men's Literary Association of Brooklyn;* a name which, a year later, was altered to that of the *Hamilton Literary Association of Brooklyn*, of which he was chosen the first president. It is pleasant, at this day, to recall the names of some of these young friends and compeers of Mr. Murphy's—such as Edgar J. Bartow; Geo. W., Horace W., and J. C. Dow; John Tasker Howard; J. W. and J. H. Raymond; Francis P. Sanford; Joshua M. Van Cott; Alden J. Spooner, and others—all men of mark—some of whom have passed over to the majority, while others still remain with us. This *Hamilton Literary Association* was, for over a quarter of a century, one of the vital forces of Brooklyn life and interest. It organized a system of volunteer lectures which became the commencement of the lecture system in the cities of the Union. From it, also, sprang the Brooklyn Lyceum, since the Brooklyn Institute; and, in its rooms, the best spirits of the city, in literature and science, young men indicating the highest order of talent in scholarship, the learned professions, and the mechanic arts, have found the most congenial associates and the best means and stimulus of improvement.

In 1833, after three years of study with Mr. Radcliffe, young Murphy was admitted to practice; and, in the following year, married Amelia, the daughter of Richard Greenwood, of Haverstraw, Rockland County. His law office, for two or three years ensuing, was in the old Apprentices' Library Building, on the corner of Pineapple and Fulton Streets; and he soon began to secure a generous share of the practice of the Municipal Court, which then held its sessions in the same building. At the same time (1834) he was Assistant Corporation Counsel; and, having already taken a prominent stand in politics, he was sent as a delegate to a Democratic Convention held at Herkimer; where, upon its organization, he was elected Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. With the foresight and energy with which he was ever distinguished, he promptly introduced into his Committee, and subsequently into the Convention, a resolution denunciatory of the monopoly known as the United States Bank. This was a bombshell thrown into the ranks of his party—for this policy, favored by General Jackson, and one which the State of New York had for many years been pursuing in regard to its money interests—had been expressly created for the purpose of furnishing patronage to the Democratic party; and, as may well be imagined, Mr. Murphy's resolution aroused no little excitement and opposition. It was, however, finally adopted, with some modification; but was eventually smothered in the report of the Convention's proceedings. But the fact of its suppression leaked out; and there is no doubt that the subsequent *exposé* of the matter by the *N. Y. Evening Post*, then edited by William Leggett, and by many other journals, resulted ultimately in the utter prostration and collapse of the monopolized banking system in the State of New York. The rashness of youth, in this case, united to the personal abilities displayed by Mr. Murphy, achieved a success which placed him at once in the front rank of State politicians.

Soon after this event he was appointed City Attorney, and subsequently Counsel to the Corporation of the then newly incorporated city of Brooklyn. This incorporation had only been secured by a long and determined struggle against the opposition made by the city of New York—an opposition based upon the fears of her real-estate speculators and her municipal authorities. The former, who held large quantities of land in the upper

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part of the city, foresaw that the incorporation of Brooklyn as a city would give a new impetus to her growth and population; and that Brooklyn lots would soon come into the market as formidable rivals to their own. The latter saw, in the energy of their youthful and aspiring neighbor, a power which, when grown to maturer strength, might wrest from New York her long contested and profitable water and ferry monopolies. So capital, speculation, and monopoly joined hands in a most formidable league against the aspirations and endeavors of Brooklyn. But the latter finally secured her incorporation, and in this result Mr. Murphy had no inconsiderable share. As his father had been instrumental in securing the incorporation of Brooklyn as a village, so the son contributed of *his* best efforts to secure for his birthplace the higher civic dignity.

About this time (1835) Mr. Murphy was in the full tide of mental activity. Arduously engaged in the successful practice of his profession; intimately concerning himself in the politics alike of his native city, county, and State; he was, also, devoting himself—as few men of his surroundings did, at that day—to the ennobling pursuits of literature. Especially was he, for many years, a welcome contributor to the *North American* and to the *Democratic Review;* and the manifestations of his abilities in this direction undoubtedly added strength to his political standing. "Murphy," says one of his earlier friends, "came on to the stage of action with the reputation of being a scholar. At that time there were a number of men in the Democratic party of Kings County, perhaps more than there have ever been since, of strong common-sense, real ability, and great force and vigor, but they were uneducated. They had ideas, but they wanted them formulated. Murphy was educated, and he was exactly the man wanted. Hence, from the beginning, he was greatly deferred to, and was a prominent figure, being recognized as a scholar in politics."

And so there came to the young politician and counsellor the opportunity which he could not but accept. Counsellor John A. Lott, the then leading lawyer of Brooklyn, offered him a partnership. Subsequently, Vanderbilt was admitted to the firm, and the celebrated firm of Lott, Murphy & Vanderbilt commenced a career of honor and prosperity which continued for over twenty years. It won the confidence of the old Dutch residents of Brooklyn and its neighboring towns, as well as of Long Islanders generally, and to its ability, wisdom, and integrity they committed the care of their surplus funds, and the conduct of their legal affairs with the most implicit faith. With these simple burghers no court was more thoroughly respected than Lott, Murphy & Vanderbilt. Old citizens relate that the dictum of the firm carried more weight than the fiat of any court; and, that when the court and the firm disagreed, the obstinate old Dutchmen shook their heads and pitied the ignorance of the court. Enjoying the best practice of Long Island, the firm waxed wealthy and active in politics; and soon became the controlling influence in the Democratic party on that side of the East River. In fact, all Democratic politics centred in its office, which was in Front Street, next door to the corner of Fulton, in a building yet standing. To attempt to note the political career of this legal firm would be to write the political history of Brooklyn from 1835 to 1857. "This may be remarked"—we continue our quotation from another who knew well whèreof he speaks—"that the decadence of the political power of this firm marked the end of the *village system of politics*, with its open caucuses, wherein the man of power legitimately exer-

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cised his influence among his fellow-voters, by speech and argument—and, since then, we have had the system of *city politics*, with its primary elections, wherein the power of the leader was manifested through the result, most mysteriously and without argument. It was not a change for the better. Deftness in speech was supplemented by deftness in manipulation of votes; dexterity in argument made way for that dexterity which makes one count two for your side. The deterioration in our political methods began then, and the standard of candidates was lowered when the new system came in. No doubt, under the regency of Lott, Murphy & Vanderbilt there was complaint made of arrogance and dictation; no doubt, defeated aspirants, who felt the powerful hand of the firm against them, were satisfied that nothing but ruin could result from such a system; but, yet, it is to be said for that system that the candidates were men of honor, character, and ability, and that honesty of administration was the rule. Of this political management Murphy was the master-spirit, Lott was the legal mind, and Vanderbilt—handsome in person and winning in address—figured as the favorite son of Kings, being the firm's candidate for Governor for many years, and at one time gaining, at least, the nomination for Lieutenant-Governor. Enough, however, has been said to show that, in that little Front Street office, for a period of over twenty years, many a man's political fortune was made or marred."

To return again to the direct narrative of Mr. Murphy's life, we must note that, in 1839, he was a trustee and actively engaged in the formation of the *Brooklyn City Library*, which was modelled on the plan of the old Society Library of New York. A valuable collection of books was accumulated, which, years after—the Library having become extinct—was divided between the Apprentices' Library and the Long Island Historical Society. Again, in 1840, upon the reorganization of the *Apprentices' Library* (an institution most intimately connected in many ways with the growth of the city of Brooklyn), Mr. Murphy was one of the new board of trustees. In still another direction, also, he contributed to the literary and material interests of the city. In October, 1841, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle and Kings County Democrat* was started by several prominent Democratic politicians, as a campaign sheet to operate in the approaching State election in November; and, also, as an experiment, to ascertain whether the city could support a daily Democratic paper. It was issued as a morning paper, and Mr. Murphy (who was its real proprietor) and Richard Adams Locke (author of the celebrated *Moon Hoax*) were its editors. It proved an unexpected success, and its proprietors, instead of suspending it at the close of the campaign, continued it as a daily paper. In April of the following year it passed into the ownership of Isaac Van Arden; and has become, under the abbreviated name of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, the most influential paper of that city. Mr. Murphy never lost his interest in this child of his creation, and his facile pen found frequent occasion for exercise in its columns.

In 1842 he was chosen Mayor of the city of his love, being then thirty-two years old. He found himself face to face with a spirit of municipal extravagance, engendered by the wild era of speculation and recklessness which culminated in the "commercial crisis of 1837;" and (commencing with a reduction of his own salary as Mayor) he inaugurated a system of retrenchment which confined the expenditures of the city within the limits of its income, to the entire satisfaction of its tax-paying citizens.

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From this time forth his reputation became more than that of a local leader, though at no time were his efforts to assist in Brooklyn's development relaxed. Taken into the counsels of the leaders of the State, known and consulted even in national affairs, he was—as we have seen, ever busy in promoting the establishment of local institutions of learning, and wisely forecasting a policy for the extension of the city's commerce. Under his administration Myrtle Avenue, now an old and populous thoroughfare, was opened and paved; and by his hand the acts which may be said to have secured the colossal warehouse system on Brooklyn's water-front were prepared. In 1844 he was one of the organizers and officers of the *Brooklyn Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor*. So satisfactory was his administration of civic affairs, that, before the expiration of his term of office, he was elected to Congress, and took his seat in the twenty-eighth session of that body, in 1843. Among his colleagues from New York were Wm. B. Maclay, Hamilton Fish, Zadoc Pratt, Preston King, Samuel H. Beardsley, Smith M. Purdy, Horace Wheaton, Washington Hunt, and others. Although one of its youngest members, he at once took a high position in that body; and in the debates upon the tariff question, his advocacy of a system of duties for revenue purposes only, attracted to him general attention. The free-traders in Congress found in him a most acceptable reinforcement, for he was admirably equipped with facts for use; and had a most ready and logical manner of presenting them in debate. On the question of the annexation of Texas, he advocated the measure, but advised its postponement, in order that Mexico might be afforded an opportunity to give her assent; and that, thereby, more unanimity might be secured in its favor in the United States. In view of the events which transpired, immediately upon the adoption of that measure, the wisdom of this recommendation must be admitted. On other questions of public policy he took an equally prominent position; and, with marked ability, opposed the alteration of the naturalization laws, for which the so-called Native American party were then clamoring, and strongly urged the inconsistency of such a measure with the genius of our government, and the bad effects it would have upon future settlement of the public domain. The one local achievement of the session was the securing of an appropriation and authority for the building of the splendid Naval Dry Dock at Wallabout Bay. His term of Congressional service ended March 4, 1845, having been defeated on a vote for re-election during the previous autumn; but his success on the floor of debate, his clearness of political foresight, his sobriety of judgment, and his devotion to the public interest had been so marked as already to have set the seal of general approval upon his claims to be spoken of as an important figure in national affairs.

When, in June, 1846, in response to the expressed will of the people of the State of New York, a Convention for the Revision of the State Constitution assembled at Albany, Mr. Murphy appeared in representation of Kings County; and, as might have been expected, bore a prominent part in the debates of that body—a body remarkable, if for nothing else, for the number of able men who were members. Among such veterans as "Ira Harris, Calvin T. Chamberlain, George W. Patterson, John Tracey, Ambrose L. Jordan, Charles H. Ruggles, Michael Hoffman, Arphaxed Loomis, Robert H. Morris, Henry Nicoll, Charles O'Conor, Lorenzo B. Shepard, Samuel J. Tilden, Charles P. Kirkland, John W. Brown, Levi S. Chatfield, Samuel Nelson, Gouverneur Kemble, John K. Porter, and Churchill C.

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Cambreling, that a young man, then but thirty-six years of age, should bear a leading part, and write his name in strong, broad characters upon the pages of the Report of the Convention, is sufficient to arrest attention. Such is the fact, and his record there is a part of the history of the State. Hardly an important question is under debate that Mr. Murphy is not found in earnest protest or support. In the division of labor he was made Chairman of the Committee on Municipal Corporations, the appointment itself testifying to the position he had already gained in the State. It seems, however, that this young man had urged upon his committee a series of propositions, the responsibilities of which it was disinclined to shoulder. Nothing daunted, he presented these propositions to the Convention, which seems to have dodged their consideration upon the plea of want of time, and referred them to the Legislature. These were:

"*Objections* to special charters as mere imitations of the grants of powers and rights by despotic and monarchical authorities.

"*Proposition*, that general laws should be passed by which all cities should be subjected to the same provisions as is the case in towns and counties.

"*Objection*, that special assessments for local improvements are subversive of the rights of private property, as calling forth, in a majority of cases, unnecessarily the right of eminent domain, and proposed that all improvements be paid out of the general fund.

"*Proposition* to limit the power of cities and villages in contracting liabilities to cases where provision had previously been made by tax in whole, or in part, thus securing to tax-payers the opportunity of determining whether they would incur the debt for any specific purpose.

"These propositions were set aside, and never considered by the Legislature. In the light of thirty-six years' experience; of forty-one millions indebtedness in the city of Brooklyn, and a hundred millions in New York; of fifteen millions of taxes and assessments in arrears in Brooklyn; the millions of bonded indebtedness of towns and villages throughout the State, and of the burdens small real-estate owners and farmers are struggling under, it is impossible to escape the conclusion, that the one young man of thirty-six was far more sagacious and farther-sighted than his colleagues, many of whom were then famous throughout the nation, and gray in the service of the State. If these propositions had been made a part of the fundamental law of the State, Tweed would not have been a word—a synonym for official faithlessness and public robbery, and the representatives of bond-burdened towns would not be besieging the doors of the Legislature, asking that the State assume the debt of towns contracted through the lying arts of railroad projectors. Brooklyn would not have had improvements through lands that could not pay a third of the assessment; would not have barely escaped bankruptcy as she did. These propositions, rejected as they were, speak loudly for the sagacity of the young man of thirty-six. Twenty-six years later the Constitutional Commission considered some of these propositions, or similar ones, and in a modified form adopted some of them."

His course, on his return from the Convention, was endorsed by his re-election to Congress (1846) by the largest vote ever previously polled in his district.

His term of service expired in 1849; and upon his return to Brooklyn he entered, zealously into many projects for its improvement. Largely

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through his efforts, and those of some of his old associates, in 1847, had been obtained the authority of the Legislature to purchase the Fort Greene property, and convert it into what is now known as *Washington Park*, one of the most central, delightful, and healthful places for recreation of which any city can boast. He also took a leading part in the different measures which accomplished the introduction of the Ridgewood public supply of water into the city, from the streams on Long Island, and prepared most of the laws which were passed by the Legislature upon that subject. In these public matters, in the increasing practice of his profession, and in those more congenial literary pursuits to which he now began again to turn his attention, the years passed quickly along; until, in 1852, he narrowly escaped, at the Democratic Convention at Baltimore, being the candidate of that party for the Presidency. Thirty-five ballots had been taken—without result—when the delegation from Virginia, always a potent factor in the Democratic councils, took up and considered the names of Henry C. Murphy, of New York, and Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire, as the most available men. Pierce's military record in the Mexican war tipped the scales in his favor; and he was chosen as their man by the Virginia delegation, by one majority. In Convention, on the thirty-sixth ballot, Virginia presented Pierce's name, which steadily growing in favor, on the forty-seventh he was nominated; and Mr. Murphy most efficiently directed the canvass for Pierce, as he afterward did, in 1856, when Buchanan was nominated.

Shortly after Mr. Buchanan's accession to the Presidency, Mr. Murphy received from him the offer of appointment as United States Minister to the Hague. The position was, in his own opinion, of but barren importance, and one which was maintained by the United States more because of relations which had formerly existed between this country and the States of Holland, than for any actual present need. Yet, identified as he had long been with the rescue from oblivion of the early history of our State, particularly that portion of it which relates to our first colonization by Holland, there was something in the opportunity which this appointment offered eminently congenial to his literary and historic tastes. So he accepted it—with, perhaps, a more than suspicion that it was, in some sort, the closing of his political career—and, after a farewell banquet, given to him at the Mansion House, in Brooklyn, August 5, 1857, in which a great assemblage of his fellow-citizens and friends, of all parties, met together to bid him God-speed, he sailed for the scene of his new labors. But it is worthy of note, that, in his farewell speech at that banquet there was a singularly prophetic sentence, when, speaking of the growth of Brooklyn, he said: "It requires no spirit of prophecy to foretell the union of the two [New York and Brooklyn] at no distant day. The river which divides them will soon cease to be a line of separation; and, bestrode by the Colossus of Commerce, will form the link which will bind them together." Unconsciously prophetic as this utterance probably was, he lived to see, aye, and to find his own name, labors, and influence most intimately connected with its actual fulfilment.

Fortunately for our literary interests, at the time when Mr. Murphy assumed the duties of resident United States Minister at the Hague, the political relations of this government with Holland were of the most friendly nature, and the commercial limited. Hence it happened that, for three years at least, he had no heavy official duties imposed upon him, but found ample

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time for the pursuance of those studies, the opportunity for which was doubtless the real cause of his acceptance of the mission. He found time to communicate a series of thirty-five most interesting letters upon Holland, and other parts of Europe, and which were published in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, and many of them copied extensively into other papers. They are of especial value for the amount of information which they embody concerning the relations of the Netherlands and its people with the beginnings of our State, and for the entertaining and instructive description which they contain of the scenery, customs, and habits of life in Holland.

He did better literary work than this, however, during his residence at the Hague, of which we shall speak more fully in discussing his literary life.

While thus, far away, he was engaged in peaceful pursuits, events at home were rapidly culminating toward a rupture between the North and the South. When all hopes of compromise or adjustment of the pending difficulties were abandoned, it was deemed exceedingly important that all the governments of Europe should be correctly informed of the precise facts of the case, and of the real relation of the States to the Federal Government, in order that foreign powers might readily see and adhere to their well-established line of duty. Accordingly, Minister Murphy, in common with all the representatives of the United States at foreign courts, was instructed to lay before the power to which he was accredited, a truthful statement of the facts of the case. In accordance with these instructions, he addressed to the government at the Hague an elaborate exposition of the relationship of the States to one another and to the general government, clearly pointing out the supremacy of the latter in all matters committed to it by the Constitution, and the equally absolute rights of the States over all matters not delegated to the United States by that instrument. And he availed himself, also, of the opportunity to show that the rebellion owed its origin chiefly to sectional hate and the ambition of its leaders. This paper, which was published in the *Diplomatic Correspondence* of 1861 and 1862, was highly praised at the time of its publication by citizens of all parties, and approved by the government authorities, being generally considered as the clearest and most statesmanlike of any of the statements at that time made by our representatives abroad.

After the inauguration of President Lincoln Mr. Murphy was recalled; and promptly upon his return to the United States, he announced his determination to uphold the national flag against secession, and was immediately elected to the United States Senate as a Union man—a position which he steadfastly maintained during the whole war. At the State Convention of the Democratic party, in 1862, he was chosen temporary chairman, and insisted that all citizens, without distinction of party, should support the administration in putting an end to the rebellion, a sentiment which he reaffirmed with great force and eloquence in the Annual Oration before the Tammany Society, on July 4, 1863. Indeed, he was no less zealous in acts than in words, for, mainly by his exertions, the Third Senatorial Regiment—the One Hundred and Fifty-ninth New York State Volunteers, Colonel Molineux—was raised, and bounties paid to the men, without calling upon either the city, county, or State authorities for that purpose. Detraction, ever busy during the war, as in all scenes and periods of public excitement, sought to injure Minister Murphy's fair fame, making use of certain private letters written home by him from the Hague, but which were, at the worst, not

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sufficiently high-keyed to satisfy the red hot popular feeling at the time. Detraction, however, slunk away cowed in the face of his presence and conduct, from the moment of his appearance in this country, until the close of the conflict.

Personally, however, a severer trial awaited his return to America. We have already referred to the implicit faith placed by the old Dutch families in the firm of Lott, Murphy & Vanderbilt. During Mr. Murphy's absence abroad the management of the funds committed to the firm for investment fell into the hands of an agent, who proved faithless, not from want of integrity, but from recklessness, high living, and indifference. Old Judge Lott, one of the most honest of men, and who thought every one else the same, had not been aware of what was going forward even under his eye. Upon the return of Mr. Murphy, who believed himself secure in a competence gained in previous years, these irregularities were discovered, and, moreover, that there were large deficits in the accounts of the funds. Messrs. Lott & Murphy began a careful examination, and, arriving at a thorough knowledge of affairs, took from their own accumulations to discharge the liabilities of the firm. Not a single client or investor suffered by a penny's worth of capital or interest, though it nearly ruined Mr. Murphy and seriously crippled Judge Lott. It had been the intention of Mr. Murphy to retire from active business, but this disaster necessitated renewed and unremitting devotion to business again to repair his shattered fortune.

In the fall of 1861, though he had determined to eschew politics, Mr. Murphy was induced to take the nomination for the State Senate, under the auspices of what was known as the Fort Greene Union movement, and was elected. He was chosen five times after that, without much effort on his part, serving in all twelve consecutive years, when he refused to serve again. In this capacity he exercised great influence, especially in moulding the fortunes of his native city. "During the lapse of years Brooklyn had grown to man's estate, still wearing the habiliments of youth; it was metropolitan in size and village-like in habit. It was the worst-paved and the worst-lighted and the worst-sewered city in the country. Improvements were deemed to be necessary, and schemes were lying undeveloped in busy brains before 1860. The war had turned the direction of men's thoughts in another way. Immediately upon its close, however, the schemes came out, and Brooklyn attempted to accomplish in a few years what should have been done previously over a space of twenty-five. To prepare and urge forward and bring these to a successful conclusion, the laws necessary to the accomplishment of the schemes were entrusted to Senator Murphy. Indeed, for the space of twelve years, during which time all these great measures were projected, Mr. Murphy was intimately connected with everything which appertained to the city of Brooklyn and the county of Kings. It is impossible to turn in any direction without coming in contact with the impress of his hand. His influence is felt on every page of the charter, and it is not too much to say that Henry C. Murphy's best monument is the city of Brooklyn and what she contains."

His efforts, however, were not solely devoted to Brooklyn in the Senate. He was in some respects the most influential member of that body, as he certainly was, during the time of his service, the most intellectual. In all matters relating to the State he bore a conspicuous part, and in all the important debates, and particularly distinguished himself in his efforts to

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repeal the law in regard to ecclesiastical tenures and to establish isolated quarantine in the lower bay, in which he was successful. During his senatorial career he always adhered to the principle of carrying on the different internal improvements throughout the State by State aid, without regard to the section where they were proposed, provided they contributed to the general prosperity. Having been a strict constructionist, he voted against ratifying the amendments to the Constitution of the United States abolishing slavery, holding that, as the Federal Government is one of delegated powers exclusively, and as the subject of slavery was not embraced in the Constitution, and was to be disposed of only by the States where it existed, the power of amendment was necessarily limited to the subjects embraced in the Constitution and did not legitimately apply to that of abolishing slavery.

Prominent as he was in his party, it is not strange that he should have been many times mentioned in connection with the gubernatorial office. In 1866, and again in 1868, his name was strongly pushed for nomination, being each time defeated by the Tweed ring nominee, Hoffman, and with the effort of 1868 Mr. Murphy seems to have abandoned all ambition for the office. Yet the politicians of that day believed that, had his name been presented in 1872 he would easily have secured the nomination. In 1875 the term of United States Senator Fenton expired, and the Legislature on the joint ballot was Democratic. At once Mr. Murphy's friends put him forward for the place, but eventually he had to yield to the claims of Senator Kernan, backed as they were by the then all-powerful interest of Horatio Seymour; and Mr. Murphy's senatorial services ended with the year 1873.

In the convention of 1867–8, called to remodel the State Constitution, he was chosen a delegate from the State at large; and though prevented by illness from attending during a portion of the time covered by its deliberations, he yet took part in many of the most important discussions. This convention, however, made but little impress upon the State, since its results were in the main defeated when submitted to the vote of the people. "In the review of Mr. Murphy's political life it is impossible," says one who was intimate with its details, "to escape the conclusion that that career actually culminated with his retirement from the Ministry to the Hague. True, there were circumstances and events he could not control at that time. The party of his early adhesion passed out of power in the year 1861. The Democratic party went into a minority that would have been contemptible if it were not pitiable. The ambitions of Democrats were put into their pockets necessarily, and for Henry C. Murphy there was not for years a field for national action. Entering the State Senate was, after all, entering a narrower field than that in which he had previously won position and renown. It is true he served his fellow-citizens with power and effect—there was neither a diminution of intellect nor a lessening of energy seen, yet for all that there was a check called in his upward career. It must be also concluded that for a man having within him the great possibilities he did have, his after-career was a disappointment. He sought the Governorship and none denied him the conspicuous abilities to fill with honor to himself, credit to his country, and benefit to the people the place to which he aspired. He was apparently the choice of the people, but the mysterious influences of manipulating politicians, now better understood by the people, thwarted their will and his ambition. With his disappointment in the senatorial contest he seems to have withdrawn entirely from partici-

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pation in the politics of the party in which forty years of his life had passed. He escaped the ranks of the highest distinction by the merest chances, and though his life was full of honor, of great deeds, and high achievements, he doubtless felt himself a disappointed man. His temperament may have been an element in this result, for he was neither warm enough nor sympathetic enough to attach to him that devoted following that is historical in the case of Henry Clay and Horatio Seymour. And yet both of these men failed in their great aspiration. His name is inseparably interwoven with the history of the first half century of Brooklyn, and memory of him cannot die so long as Brooklyn continues to exist. This can be said: That to-day, looking back over the past, his figure stands out as the most considerable the Democratic party of Brooklyn ever possessed; while inquiry into the record of his life forces the conviction that he was the greatest man native to her soil."

During the time which had elapsed since his return from Europe, Mr. Murphy had very naturally become largely identified with the corporate interests of the city. Vast schemes of improvement were projected and carried forward between the years 1865 and 1875—and though the corporate organizations by which they were carried through are not now in good repute, owing largely to the fact that corporations themselves have shown a disposition to reach out for power not legitimately theirs, and dangerous to the people, yet future generations, which will not feel the pressure of the burdens imposed, will be disposed to applaud the efforts of those years and characterize them as of sagacious foresight and extraordinary energy. It is not likely to be until after the burden imposed upon this people is lifted that its results can be fully appreciated, and the consequences of a failure to have done this work properly estimated. The first half century of Brooklyn's existence as a city is rapidly approaching an end, and during that time there has been scarcely a movement of a public kind, an institution of a public nature, or an event of a public character that Henry C. Murphy has not been identified with, in its inception, at least, and when the analysis of his life is carefully made the weight of his influence in shaping the destiny of the city will astonish the student.

Shortly after the war the plan of a bridge over the East River was projected, the founder of which was William C. Kingsley. Into this enterprise Mr. Murphy threw himself with great energy and enlisted the interest of his friends. In its inception it was a private enterprise, and all who engaged in it invested their private funds. He was chosen president of the company at the beginning, and when it was changed from a private undertaking to a public work he was made one of its trustees and the president thereof, which position he retained to the last. The history of this enterprise is too fresh in the minds of the people to require extended remarks. To it he gave more of his personal attention than to any of the other affairs in which he was engaged; and in the minds of the people, superficially at least, his name will be more closely identified with this work than with anything else in the future. Next to this he took great interest in the recent development of Coney Island; and as president of the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island Railway Company, assumed the personal charge of the more important matters connected with its business, even to the repair of its rolling stock, and the extension of its accommodations for the public at Brighton Beach. To the Bridge office, the Coney Island Railway office, and those of the Brooklyn City Railroad and the Union Ferry

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Company, he made a visit almost every day—showing activity in attention to business remarkable in one of his years.

We have, thus far, discussed Mr. Murphy as the politician, statesman, lawyer, and promoter of public interests. Let us now dwell for awhile upon that other aspect of his character, which we, perhaps, as literary men and students, will find more congenial to our contemplation—*i.e.*, his love of books and his historical writings.

He had, as we have seen, from the very commencement of his career, devoted much of his leisure to literary pursuits, as the editor—for a considerable time—of the *Brooklyn Advocate*, and afterward of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, of which he was for some years the proprietor; and he was an ever-welcome contributor to the *Democratic Review*, the *North American Review*, and the *Historical Magazine*. These efforts brought him literary recognition and fame among scholars, and even among the class of politicians by whom he was surrounded they gave him an element of strength which contributed not a little to his success in public life. But, at the same time, though these associates felt and honored the power which these studies gave him, they could not sympathize with them; and, indeed, the line of thought in which his mind travelled was not such as would naturally enlist general attention, since the subjects were learned, abstruse, and remote from the popular taste. His specialty of study was the early history of America, particularly upon those explorations of the coast which led to the settlement of the United States by Europeans; and it was his Dutch blood, perhaps, which led him to greatly delight in studying the relations of the Dutch Republic upon the opening and settling of this New Continent. With these subjects in view he commenced, at an early period in his life, the collection of a library from which he could draw his materials. Of this collection we have a memorial in a pamphlet modestly entitled, "*A Catalogue of an American Library, Chronologically Arranged*," consisting of fifty-eight pages (18mo, large margin) giving five hundred and eighty-nine titles and printed by I. Van Anden, Brooklyn. A manuscript note on the fly-leaf of the copy in possession of the Long Island Historical Society is as follows: "This catalogue contains a list of books relating to America, printed before the year 1800, in my library at the time it was prepared, about ten years ago. Since that time the number has been greatly enlarged, but I have as yet not catalogued it. June, 1863. H. C. M." The words at the end of this catalogue (which may be considered as his first printed work) are "End of the First Part," indicating an intention to continue the indexing of his library. Between its publication, in 1853, and 1860, in which year Mr. Murphy's collection was included in Dr. Wynne's "*Private Libraries of America*," it had increased to "over five thousand volumes, fully three-quarters of which relate to the peculiar topic of his researches." Dr. Wynne also says that "the library may be divided into four classes—one relating to early American history; one to local American history; one to later American history, and the last of a miscellaneous character, each of which embraces about a quarter of the whole." It is exceptionally rich in volumes remarkable for their rarity. He procured, for example, twenty-five of the very scarce "*Jesuit Relations de ce qui s'est dans la Nouvelle France*." Then there are the early New England tracts, by Eliot, Shepard, Winslow and Whitfield, published in 1643 and 1659, with all of their quaint titles, such as "*First Fruits*," "*The Day Breaking of the Gospel, if not the Sun Rising with the Indians in New England*," etc.

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Of these the rarest, since there is but one other copy, is "*Some Helps for the Indians in the New Haven Colony*," by Abraham Pierson, a Puritan clergyman, afterward one of the founders of Newark, New Jersey. Francis Breton's "*Dechonaire of the Mexican Language*," published at Mexico, in 1571, and a copy of that rarest of all American books, the first edition of "*Colden's History of the Five Nations*," published in New York, in 1727; "*Penhallow's Indian Wars;*" "*Doolittle's Narrative Indian Wars on the Western Frontier of Massachusetts*," published in 1750. "*History of the Pequot War.*" The whole of the collection relative to Indian history and philology is rare and rarely to be met with either in American or European collections. His copy of the "*Vocabulary of Indian Language*," by Rogers Williams, once belonged to the poet Southey and has his autograph. Relative to early colonization there are three folio volumes of *Ramusie*, with maps, the first published in Venice in 1559, the second in 1563, and the third in 1565; "*Eden's Decades of Peter Martyr*," 1555; "*Eden's Travels*," completed by Willes, 1577; DeBry's "*Grands et Petits Voyages*" of the first edition, with *Hakluyt* of the editions or 1589 and 1599. Also to be found in this collection is the "*Cosmographia, Introductio in quatuor Americi Vespuci Navigationes, St. Diey*, 1507." Humboldt, in referring to this book, speaking of its rarity, said that he was astonished to find that it was not named in the "Bibliotheque Societe," and that he knew of only two copies, one in the Vatican Library, at Rome, and the other in the Royal Academy, in Berlin. One cannot, however, enumerate the many rare and valuable volumes in his library.

In 1853, Mr. Murphy published the "*Voyage from Holland to America, A. D. 1632–1644. By David Petersen De Vries*" (New York, 4to, 200 pages; only 200 copies printed), which, at the suggestion of James Lennox, Esq., of New York, he had translated from the Dutch, and enriched with an Introduction of fourteen pages and ten pages of Notes.

His next appearance as a historical student is in connection with the "*Broad Advice to the New Netherlands*," published in the Collections of the New York Historical Society (iii., Second Series). The original is in Dutch, published in 1649; the author unknown, conjectured by Mr. Murphy, who is the translator, to be Cornelis Melyn. It occupies pages 237–284 of the volume.

In 1857, he went to the Hague, as before stated, and the first reminder of his interest in these matters, which some of his friends at home received from him, was a little octavo pamphlet of 25 pages (Preface dated "The Hague, April 1, 1858"), entitled "*The First Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States.*" This was a translation and annotation of a recently discovered letter of Jonas Michaëlius, written at Manhatas, in New Netherlands, August 11, 1628. It was printed (from the press of of The Brothers Giunta D'Albani) for private distribution.

This was followed the next year (1859) by a more ambitious tract, from the same press, and also for private distribution only, entitled "*Henry Hudson in Holland. An Inquiry into the Origin and Objects of the Voyage which led to the Discovery of the Hudson River. With Bibliographical Notes*" (8vo, 72 pp. Portrait of Dirk van Os). This memoir (Preface dated "The Hague, April 15, 1859") was the result of an investigation made at the Hague "for the sake of ascertaining, more precisely than had hitherto been explained, the circumstances which originated the voyage made on behalf of the Dutch India Company by Henry Hudson; the mo-

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tives, purposes, and character of its projectors, and the designs of the navigator himself at the time he sailed upon that expedition. Mr. Murphy's official position at the Court of the Hague gave him excellent advantages, of which he liberally availed himself, to make researches into the ancient records of the Dutch East India Company (especially those of its Committee, or "Council of Seventeen"), as well as those of the Chambers of Amsterdam and Zeeland, respectively; and into the Archives of the Kingdom at the Hague—with the result of eliciting some new and curious information.

It was during Mr. Murphy's sojourn in Holland, also, that he prepared for the columns of his old paper, *The Brooklyn Eagle*, the series of letters on Holland to which reference has already been made.

Upon his return to America, the interests arising from the great civil conflict, in which he found his native country engaged, naturally absorbed most of his time and attention; but just about the period of its close, in 1865, he again appeared before the literary public, under the auspices of the celebrated private book club, known as the "Bradford Club," in "*The Anthology of the New Netherlands, or Translations from the Early Dutch Poets of New York. With Memoirs of their Lives.*" In this elegantly printed volume (125 copies only; 8vo, 208 pages, portrait of Steendam) he presented a gracefully versified translation of some of the earliest poems written within the bounds of the present State of New York. The poets to whom he thus gave a new lease of fame were Jacob Steendam, 1636–1650; Rev. Henricus Selyns, the first settled minister of Brooklyn, 1660; and Nicasius de Sille, first Councillor of State under Governor Stuyvesant.

But the work which he probably hoped to make his *magnum opus*, and to which, during all these years, he had devoted most of the labor and study afforded him by the intervals of leisure which he could wrest from his official and professional duties, was a History of Maritime Discovery in America. A monograph, which he published privately in 1875, entitled "*The Voyage of Verrazano*" (from the press of Joel Munsell; 8vo, 198 pp., 5 maps*), which contained that portion of his intended work relating to that discoverer, and which was adverse in its argument to the claims of Verrazano, did not seem to receive, at the hands of the critics, that acceptance which Mr. Murphy had, perhaps, too sanguinely expected; and, in the opinion of some of his friends, his ardor in the work received a check from which it did not, for some time, recover. But, after he left the Senate, and until he became involved in the Bridge and the Coney Island Railway enterprises, it is said that he labored diligently, and had made considerable progress in the work. It is, however, very much doubted whether the work is sufficiently advanced to justify a belief that it will add materially to his literary fame; or that it can be completed, agreeably to his plan, by other hands.

In 1867, the appearance of a fine volume entitled "*A Journal of a Voyage to New York and a Tour in Several of the American Colonies, in 1679–80. By Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter, of Wieverd in Friesland. Translated from the Original Manuscript in Dutch, for the Long Island Historical Society, and Edited by Henry C. Murphy, Foreign Corresponding Secretary of the Society*" (Brooklyn, 1867. 8vo, 440 pp.,

* The "certain important documents," relating to Verrazano, from the archives of Spain and Portugal, which formed the nucleus, so to speak, of this tract, were, in a measure, a legacy from his deceased friend, Buckingham Smith, Esq., to whose memory it was inscribed.

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maps and plates) testified at once to his continued interest in the historic lore of the Nieuw Netherlands, and to his love for the Society of which he was a founder and distinguished member. This was a translation of an exceedingly curious manuscript, which by some fortuitous circumstance had escaped damage and destruction, and which he discovered in the possession of Mr. Frederick Müller, a bookseller in Amsterdam, by whom its intrinsic historical interest does not seem to have been appreciated. It forms the first of the three volumes of Transactions which this young but energetic Society has thus far published.

It is a proper place, perhaps, here to speak of Mr. Murphy's connection with the Long Island Historical Society. His name stands at the head of the eight persons who, on February 14, 1863, issued a circular calling for a meeting to establish a "Long Island Historical Society," which should "discover, procure and preserve the three-fold Indian, Dutch and English History of the Island, and whatever may relate to the general history, to the natural, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary history of the United States, the State of New York, and more particularly of the counties, cities, towns, and villages of Long Island." His life-long friends, Alden J. Spooner (to whom the credit of the suggestion is pre-eminently due), Judge John Greenwood, John Winslow, Judge Joshua M. Van Cott, representing *Kings* County; R. C. McCormick, Jr., and Henry Onderdonk, Jr., the historian, representing *Queens* County; and Judge Henry P. Hedges, of *Suffolk* County—all but one of whom were lawyers—were those who were connected with him in this movement. In the first three years of the Society's existence, during which I was its librarian, I saw much of Mr. Murphy. His office was on the floor below the Society's rooms, in the Hamilton Building, and was easily reached by a rear door from our rooms. It was then a very usual thing for Mr. Murphy, as he came in from Bay Ridge in the morning, if he had any little business at our rooms, to pass through the Library on his way to his office; and, not unfrequently, he would escape from the cares of business, to spend an hour amid the books, or in chatting pleasantly with some of his old friends upon historic or literary matters. No one who has only seen Mr. Murphy in public or in business relations, can imagine how changed a man he appeared in these infrequent hours of ease. Usually, in the street, or in his office, his countenance wore a wearied, stern, and somewhat disappointed aspect, which did not invite approach. But, seated in some snug corner of the Library, surrounded by the bookish atmosphere which he loved so well, and by old friends and tried, all this hardness fell off from him, and his face was transfigured for the time by animation and humor. His contributions of books, from time to time, were numerous and valuable; and I recall how carefully he remembered, amid a great pressure of private business, to attend to the calls which I occasionally ventured to make upon him for the loan of some choice book or rare pamphlet. He seemed never to forget any promise of this sort. I cannot but incorporate on these pages the discriminating estimate of his relations and services to the Long Island Historical Society, expressed in the Minute adopted by that body, December 11, 1882, as follows:

"His interest in the institution, from its commencement to the present, has been of essential and continual benefit to it, and to its Library. He had been a generous contributor to it, both in books for its collection and of money for its treasury. He has personally and successfully solicited

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aid for it at the different conjunctures when it has been in urgent need of relief or of enlargement. His counsels concerning its administration have always been intelligent, liberal and candid, marked by an affectionate solicitude for its welfare, and the desire for constant expansion in its plans and work. His attendance at the meetings of the Board and of the Society has been regular and punctual, when public duties have not altogether preoccupied his attention; and his courtesy in discussion has uniformly corresponded with his generosity in action, and with the courageous wisdom of his plans."

One of Mr. Murphy's latest literary efforts was a graceful *Memoir of Herman Ernst Ludwig*, the bibliophile and student of American local literature, prepared, by request, for the forthcoming third volume of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society's "Memorial Biographies."

We have referred to his residence at Bay Ridge. It was an elegant dwelling, located upon the high shore overlooking the bay, and was known as "Owl's Head," a name supposed to have been applied to the spot by the Indians. Upon the stone posts of the Third Avenue gateway to the grounds, two graven owl's heads perpetuated the name and legend. In this house he lived for over thirty years, disposing of it only in April last, to Mr. Eliphalet W. Bliss.

Judged, then, from either of the three aspects which his life presents toward us—as lawyer, statesman or student—HENRY C. MURPHY stands well the test of the application of a high standard.

As a lawyer, his delivery was not calculated to captivate the masses, nor did he use any tricks of oratory; his rhetoric was plain and severe in quality, appealing less to the emotions and passions than to the intellect of his hearers. Yet he was a ready speaker, and when he warmed to his subject his wealth of reading and study became manifest. History, precedent, analogy, statistics and illustration were then at ready command, to fortify the positions he had assumed, and they were marshalled with a logic that was irresistible. Learned in the law, penetrative in his analysis, and powerful in his conclusions, he at all times challenged the respect of his professional brethren.

So, also, in legislative debate and upon the public platform—while he was never a popular speaker in the sense that Henry Clay, James T. Brady, or others, were—yet his powerful logic and his command of facts gave him a power which was not diminished by the severity of his style or the barrenness of his rhetoric. Even his literary works betray this plainness of style, though they possess far more of ornamentation than is found in his public addresses. Perhaps the explanation of this fact may partly be, that his public efforts were mostly extemporaneous. In him was combined, to a remarkable degree, the union of the studious faculty and of a ready executive capacity. His private character was that of a high-toned and honorable gentleman, and no public man of our day has probably passed through so conspicuous and trying a career, with such entire freedom from any taint of corruption.

The end of all these activities came to him, at his residence, No. 133 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, after a few days' illness, on the morning of December 1, 1882. From the first of this brief illness, he seemed to have a premonition of the fatal result, and the serenity and mental power so characteristic of him was undiminished to the very last. On the 3d of December, after a largely attended funeral service at the Church of the

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Holy Trinity, Brooklyn Heights, he was carried to his rest in the family vault at Greenwood. His wife survives him, as do his only children, Henry C. and George I. Murphy, both of whom were for some years past associated with him in the practice of his profession.

Fitting and true are the few words in which our departed friend and counsellor was sketched by one who knew him well since boyhood: "A statesman, and the friend of statesmen; a politician, and the friend of those who make politics a business; a scholar and a man long and variedly interested in material enterprises; public spirited, and yet often wagging with the humor of his time; far from austere in his personal habits, but evincing in innumerable ways a high sense of personal honor; sour and severe to those who knew him not, but to his friends sweet as summer; unsentimental in his dealings with the material side of life, but to women and children as gallant and as tender as poets are supposed to be."

This life, which we have endeavored to trace, was in some respects a singularly successful one; in other respects it had as many contradictions, disappointments, and unfulfilled aspirations as usually fall to the lot of most men. But, if the truest measure of a life's success consists in the impress which that life has made upon the time and the community in which it was lived, then, looking upon the city in which the best part of his life's work was done, the highest tribute which can be awarded to Henry C. Murphy is found in the enumeration of what he did for the city of his birth.

The authorities consulted in the foregoing sketch have been—

1. A sketch of Mr. Murphy in the *Democratic Review*, July, 1847. Vol. XXI., p. 78. With portrait.

2. *Life Sketches of the State Officers, Senators, and Members of Assembly of the State of New York.* 1868, pp. 112–117.

3. *Proceedings at the Dinner given by the Citizens of Brooklyn, at the Mansion House*, on August 5, 1857, to the Hon. Henry C. Murphy, previous to his departure on his mission as Minister to the Netherlands. Printed for Private Distribution.

4. *Wynne's Private Libraries of America*, 1860, p. 335.

5. *Mr. Murphy's Works*, in the Library of the Long Island Historical Society.

6. *Stiles' History of the City of Brooklyn, N.Y.*, 1870. Three volumes.

7. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Dec. 1, 1882.

8. *Memoranda furnished by Henry C. Murphy, Jr.*

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